

# **News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending**

## **May 15, 2010**

### **Aruba - 50 Kilos of Cocaine Aboard Mar Caribe; 3 Arrests Made**

The NA&A Coastguard seized 50 kilos of cocaine from Colombian fruit and vegetables vessel Mar Caribe, which was sailing under a Bolivian flag.

The narcotics were found by a trained drug sniffing dog.

The captain of the ship, the owner of the cargo and the recipient of the cargo were arrested. (Various media)

### **Antilles - Curaçao Savors The Prospect of Autonomy**

As independence struggles go, the process of dismantling the federation of the Netherlands Antilles is about as orderly and peaceful as it gets. On 10-10-10 (October 10, 2010) Curaçao, St Maarten, Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius will go their separate ways—but only up to a point. Curaçao and St Maarten will become self-governing territories, following the example of Aruba, a sixth Dutch-speaking Island in the Caribbean which broke away in 1986. But all will remain under the Dutch crown. The tiniest three islands—Saba, Bonaire and St Eustatius—will become overseas municipalities, with a similar status to towns in the Netherlands. The attractions of autonomy are obvious in Curaçao (population: 142,000), the most populous island. It will take over government assets such as a large oil refinery and one of the Caribbean's biggest dry docks, both in Willemstad, the capital, and the taxes from thriving tourist and offshore-banking industries. Generously, the Dutch will pay off 70% of the federation's US \$3.3 billion debt. Local leaders have ambitious plans to develop new port facilities and hotels, and to modernize the dry dock.

The Netherlands will continue to handle foreign and defense policy. That may be just as well. Curaçao risks friction with a mighty neighbor. Hugo Chávez, Venezuela's leftist president, objects to the United States using the island as a base for anti-drug surveillance flights over the Caribbean. And the oil refinery is leased until 2019 by Venezuela's state-owned oil company, PDVSA, for US \$18m a year. PDVSA uses it to refine 200,000 barrels per day—well below its capacity.

A court has ordered the refinery to cut its sulphur-dioxide emissions or face heavy fines. In the past PdVSA has proposed an overhaul, but only if it is allowed to buy the refinery. But Curaçao wants to renegotiate the contract, when it can, to get a higher rent, says David Dick, the commissioner of economic affairs.

As well as hoping for a defense umbrella, supporters of autonomy want the continued link with the Netherlands to help prevent corruption. A small but vociferous movement wants independence and closer ties with South America. "Why do we have to go across the Atlantic Ocean to talk to our neighbors?" asks Helmin Wiels of the Curaçao island parliament. Life after October 10th threatens to be a bit less orderly. (The Economist, various media)

## **Curacao – MAN Party Struggles With Leadership**

The Curacao opposition MAN party is struggling with its leadership. Top vote getter and MP Gerrit Schotte has demanded chairmanship of the party and the mandate to select his own candidates for the next election. Current MAN management is struggling with his demands which might lead to a separation. Schotte has reportedly indicated that if his demands are not met, he will leave the party. Rumors in the media of Schotte joining the Sovereign Party of Helmin Wiels or forming his own party are strong. Schotte garnered 9.313 of the 23.569 votes his party received in the last election. (Various media)

## **St. Maarten – New Police Chief Peter de Witte Starts June 1**

St. Maarten's new police chief commissioner and former Aruban police chief commissioner Peter de Witte will start his new position June 1. Antillean Justice Minister Magali Jacoba said the four Dutch experts who will assist the reorganization process of the Windward Islands Police Force KPSSS also start June 1. (Daily Herald)

## **Antilles – Albert Martis New Co-Chair Commission for Climatology**

Director of the Meteorological Service of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba Albert Martis was elected as the new World Meteorological Organization Commission for Climatology (CCI) Co-Chair during the CCI-XV in Turkey. The CCI advises and guides the activities of the World Climate Program, through the World Climate Applications and Services Program, and the World Climate Data and Monitoring Program while providing support to many activities under the framework of the Climate Agenda. (Various media)

## **Aruba – Police Seizes Large Sum of Counterfeit Money**

The Aruban police seized a large amount of counterfeit money (approx. US \$5000) in a Palm Beach hotel room last weekend, according to a Public Prosecutor spokesperson. Two Venezuelan tourists, the supplier and the buyer, were apprehended. The buyer was released immediately, because the retailer who reported the use of counterfeit money decided not to press charges. The supplier, in possession of counterfeit money and various goods, reportedly purchased with counterfeit money, has to appear before the judge today. (Various media)

## **Curacao – Official Military Pouch Used to Smuggle Narcotics**

The Dutch Royal Military Police, together with the Curacao Police Corps, arrested four Antillean Armed Forces Servicemen. The detainees are reportedly charged with trafficking narcotics while using the official military pouch. Also, approximately three kilos of cocaine were confiscated during various house searches, a public prosecutor spokesperson stated. (Various media)

## **Curacao – Isla Refinery Startup Causes Blackout; BOO Fails Again**

The Venezuelan State-owned Oil Company PdVSA-operated Isla refinery start-up process caused an island- wide blackout, yesterday. The refinery is idle since the beginning of March when the BOO (Build, Own and Operate) plant - owned by Utility

Company Aqualectra and Japanese Trading Company Marubini – stopped producing electricity, steam, desalinated water, and compressed air for the Isla Refinery and several megawatts for the national grid. (Various media)

### **Kingdom – Dutch First Chamber Approves BES-Laws**

The Dutch First Chamber unanimously approved seven legislation proposals in the process to incorporate the BES islands Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba into the Dutch Constellation per October 10, 2010. (Various media)

### **Aruba – Icahn Group Increases Aruba Investments**

Icahn Group, the new U.S. owner of The Aruban Resort, will reportedly also re-open the former Royal Cabana Casino; an empty run-down building at Sasakiweg. Icahn Group has promised to start renovations soonest. Icahn Group owned Casino operator “Tropicana Entertainment,” seems to be the main candidate to manage the casino. (Various media)

### **Curacao - MAN Board Withdraws Schotte Chairmanship**

The MAN party's board of directors has decided not to meet Gerrit Schotte's demands to be appointed chairman of the party. Recently, Schotte had demanded the party's leadership position as well as a free hand in choosing half of the candidates for the party's election list. The MAN board stated that it had been surprised by Schotte's demands, and said that it was impossible to agree with them. The board also withdrew the proposal to make Schotte chairman. Schotte himself was quite sober in his reply: “I will continue to devote myself to Curaçao.” He promised to evaluate the situation before deciding on his next step. Current party leader Charles Cooper said that as far as the party is concerned “Schotte is still a member of the party” (Amigoe, Antilliaans Dagblad).

## **CURAÇAO**

### ***Crime May 7 – 13***

On May 9 a man was shot and killed in Biesheuvel during a shootout between vehicle occupants and several men in front of a home. Two other persons were also injured. The same day, a grocery store in Charo was robbed by three men. On May 12 a man was robbed in Steenrijk by several suspects who had broken into his home (Amigoe, Extra, La Prensa).

## **ARUBA**

### ***Crime May 7 – 13***

On May 8 a female pedestrian in Noord was robbed by a man (Diario Aruba).

## ST. MAARTEN

### ***Crime May 7 – 13***

On May 7 the Winair ticket counter at Princess Juliana International Airport was robbed by three men. One employee was beaten by the suspects. On May 10 a man was found shot and killed in the ruins of the former Mullet Bay Convention Center. The case is under investigation (Daily Herald).

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*"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruban press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."*